

The Promised



Advent of Jesus

in **Micah**



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Introduction

Each Advent season gives us the opportunity to consider again why Jesus chose to leave behind the glories of Heaven to come into our sin-soaked world. Did Jesus come to bring gifts to all the good boys and girls like the truer and greater Santa Claus? Or, did He come to suffer the just judgment of God on behalf of His rebellious enemies and grant us the gracious free gift of eternal life as His forgiven and reconciled children? The Prophet Micah helps us to see that Christ came for the latter reason. This should cause us to humbly rejoice with greater joy each Advent Season as we draw closer to receiving the full benefits of Christ's gift of eternal life to us.

Despite this truth, questions still remain as to why we would focus on Micah this Advent. Isn't its tone of judgment and wrath dissonant with a season meant for joy and celebration? Wasn't Micah's prophecy a bygone word for a bygone culture and people that doesn't have much to say to us today? Why do we need to hear about God's judgment when we're already saved? These are great questions for us to answer in order to better hear and live out what God has to say to us through His prophet Micah.

First, we need to recognize that Micah focuses on God's judgment and wrath to call the people to lamentation and repentance so as to be restored to Him. The question of God's identity and character serves as the bookends to Micah's summation of his prophetic ministry to Judah.¹ It is first asked through Micah's name which means "Who is like Yah(weh)?" Over the course of this well-crafted summary, the prophet carefully seeks to answer the question. This beautifully constructed structure will help us to see the glorious answer that God stands alone as just and forgiving through the Good Shepherd sent to redeem His people.

Micah fashions his twenty-one summative sermons into three cycles of judgment and hope in salvation.² As Bruce K. Waltke eloquently describes it, "The book is Micah's file of sermons delivered on different occasions. But his sermon files have been skillfully fitted together like pieces of a rose window in a cathedral, pieced together by catchwords and logical

¹ Micah most likely delivered his prophetic sermons from 735 B.C to 700 B.C. during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah who ruled during this period. The surrounding political circumstances were complex and threatening due to the rise of the Assyrians who God used to judge Samaria and the North Kingdom as Micah prophesied in 1:6-7. See Dale Ralph Davis, *A Study Commentary on Micah* (Leyland: EP Books, 2010; 2015 Edition), 18. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. sets the range of Micah's ministry at 735 B.C. to 690 B.C. in *The Preacher's Commentary: Micah-Malachi* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992), 21.

² Leslie C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), 260; Davis, 13; Kaiser, 24.

particles.”³ God’s deliverance features briefly in the first cycle in **Micah 2:12-13** following his opening salvo of judgment. After taking to task the civic and religious leaders in **chapter 3**, the good news of God’s salvation bursts forth in the glorious declaration of the coming of the Shepherd after God’s own heart in **Micah 4-5**. Micah concludes the third cycle following the trial in **chapter 6** with a testament of hope in the God who fulfills His promises in **7:8-20**. In a critical connection to the meaning of his own name, Micah calls for God’s people to testify to God’s uniqueness in His compassionate forgiveness of our sins.⁴ In **7:18-20**, he comes to the majestic conclusion that Yahweh stands alone as gracious and merciful in justly judging His people’s sins so as to reconcile them to Himself.

This is why Jesus forgoes the glories of Heaven to be Immanuel, God with us, amid the ruins of our lives in this fallen world. He comes to bear the full weight of our sin past, present, and future along with God’s just judgment against those sins through His death on the cross. His bearing of the judgment for our sins grants us reconciliation with God as His forgiven, beloved children. This is the truest and greatest gift of Advent!

Second, as we await the last Advent of Christ, we must acknowledge that we continue to struggle with loving the Lord and loving our neighbors as commanded. This means that we need to lament this reality and bear fruits in keeping with repentance as part of our ongoing discipleship. As **Hebrews 12:3-11** tells us, God disciplines His children whom He loves for the purpose of drawing them back to Himself. While this isn’t eternal judgment, God’s discipline serves as the goad to draw His people back to Him. The particular sins Micah diagnoses continue to be issues for us today. Leslie C. Allen makes the observation that, “Micah lived in a period of economic revolution, which was proving a mixed blessing. Unfortunately the influx of material prosperity had spawned a selfish materialism, a complacent approach to religion as a means of achieving human desires, and the disintegration of personal and social values.”⁵ This could be a diagnostic description of our circumstances today!

More important than the similarities of the cultural and religious context is that God continues to pardon iniquities and pass over transgressions. John L. McKay captures this gratifying truth in this way: “...when we see similar circumstances (to those in Micah) occurring today, it allows us to work out what God’s message is for us. He does not change. His attitude to man’s behavior and his remedy for man’s situation have always been the same. It is therefore not only legitimate but also necessary for each generation to apply the word of the Lord to its own time. In that way our perception of what is happening around us will be

³ Bruce K. Waltke, *A Commentary on Micah* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmens Publishing Company, 2007), 13-14.

⁴ John L. McKay, *Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah: God's Just Demands* (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 1988; Reprint 2019), 74.

⁵ Allen, 240.

improved, and it may be that we will respond in time to the warnings that God's word still convey to us."⁶ While we lament and repent of the ways we reflect similar sins to those in Micah, we rejoice even more in the unchanging cure offered in Christ by our pardoning and forgiving God!

Third, we ought to soberly recognize that there are many this Advent season who don't yet know God's forgiveness in Christ. As Bruce K. Waltke recognizes, "On the one hand, the faithful covenant partner, *I AM*, will fulfill his threatened curses if unfaithful Israel does not repent. On the other hand, as a faithful covenant keeper, he will cleanse his unfaithful partner by hurling their iniquities into the depths of the sea if they return to him."⁷ This remains true today: those who don't lament and repent of their sin by God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone will suffer His wrath in judgment for their sin. Advent grants us a unique season to share the good news of God's forgiveness in Christ. As ambassadors of Jesus' reconciliation, we are to proclaim who God is as Micah described Him: forgiving, patient, steadfast in love, compassionate, and faithful to preserve His people through the Good Shepherd Jesus.

This Advent Season, let's fix our eyes upon the just and pardoning God who sends Jesus, the Good Shepherd, to gather His people to dwell secure in peace in His redemption as prophesied in Micah. Bruce K. Waltke helps us to do this when he writes:

"By supernatural intervention both David's place and David's person are miraculously transformed from lowly meanness to exalted greatness and in that way become a shadow, a type, of the career of David's greater Son. Bethlehem, too little, too despised, and too weak to be mentioned by the cartographer who listed the towns of Judah in the book of Joshua or by Micah in his list of towns that fell to the Assyrians in 1:10-16, fittingly becomes the birthplace of the lowly Jesus, who was born in a stable, whose birth was announced to lowly shepherds, and who was circumcised by parents too poor to offer as their sacrifice at his circumcision anything more than turtledoves that migrated through the land in spring and fall, or young pigeons that could be had by anyone for the taking during the other two seasons (Luke 2:1-24). Even children could catch the plentiful birds in their hands. The Messiah's success depends on sovereign grace: God's election, intervention, and empowering. He renounces all human pomp and circumstance and power so that it might be evident to all that *I AM* elected him and his strength is in *I AM* (Mic. 5:3[4]). His rise to universal and eternal significance defies man's ways and thoughts and can best be accounted for by divine intervention and enablement."⁸

⁶ McKay, 77.

⁷ Waltke, 16.

⁸ Ibid., 300.

Pray that God's Word in Micah would draw us closer to Him as we celebrate the coming of His Son for the forgiveness of our sins and invite others to celebrate the same!

We will continue to seek nourishment from the Old and New Testaments for our weekly devotion and worship. Various **Psalms** will serve to call us to worship each week as they have done throughout the historical worship of God's people. We will respond together from **Micah 4:2** as we assemble before the Lord asking for the ears to hear and the heart to act on His Word for His glory and for the life of the world. Our assurances of pardon will come from **the Gospel stories of Jesus' first Advent** to anchor our faiths in Christ's redemptive purpose for coming into our fallen world. We will receive a benedictory blessing each week from **Micah 7:18-20** to remind us of God's pardoning mercy and redeeming grace. The goal of these various elements is to shape us into a humble, repentant people forgiven in Christ who hospitably invites others into the same pardoning grace.

This devotional is designed to encourage daily meditation and prayer in personal devotions and/or family worship. You are encouraged to use it the week prior to the associated sermon so that you and your family are prepared for worship. In addition to the Scriptures and associated questions, there are opportunities to pray for the various aspects of the Church. On Wednesdays, we will read and pray through John Calvin's prayer on page 10. We also have the opportunity on Saturday to prepare for worship on Sunday. On Sunday, the Lord's Day Sabbath, we will pray for the means of grace to bear specific fruits in our lives. May God bless our time in personal devotion, family worship, and corporate worship as we seek for the Church to grow in knowing God's unchanging love and living in a way that reflects our gratitude and His glory!

Soli Deo Gloria!

The Structure of Micah

Opening:

1:1: *The Word of the Lord to Micah*

The First Cycle of Judgment and Hope in Salvation:

1:2-7: *Judgment of Samaria in the North*

1:8-16: *Judgment of Jerusalem in the South*

2:1-5: *Judgment of the Greedy*

2:6-11: *Judgment of the Lying Preachers*

2:12-13: *Preservation of the Faithful Remnant*

The Second Cycle of Judgment and Hope in Salvation:

3:1-4: *Judgment of Unjust Rulers*

3:5-8: *Judgment of Misleading Prophets*

3:9-12: *Judgment of Unjust Rulers and Greedy Priests and Prophets*

4:1-13: *Peace on the Mountain of the Lord*

5:1-15: *Peace in the Coming Shepherd from Bethlehem*

The Third Cycle of Judgment and Hope in Salvation:

6:1-8: *The Lord's Call to Repentance*

6:9-16: *Judgment of the Materialistic*

7:1-7: *The Weight of the Lord's Judgment*

7:8-20: *Praise Song for the Lord's Pardon*

Sermon Schedule

| Date | Call to Worship | Assurance of Pardon | Benediction | Sacrament |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Sunday, 11/14:</i> Micah 1 | Psalm 11 | John 1:1-13 | Micah 7:18-20 | <i>Baptism</i> |
| <i>Sunday, 11/21:</i> Micah 2 | Psalm 84 | Matthew 1:18-25 | Micah 7:18-20 | <i>The Lord's Table</i> |
| <i>Sunday, 11/28:</i> Micah 3 | Psalm 33:1-12 | Luke 1:39-55 | Micah 7:18-20 | |
| <i>Sunday, 12/5:</i> Micah 4 | Psalm 33:13-22 | Luke 1:67-79 | Micah 7:18-20 | <i>The Lord's Table</i> |
| <i>Sunday, 12/12:</i> Micah 5 | Psalm 80 | Matthew 2:1-12 | Micah 7:18-20 | |
| <i>Sunday, 12/19:</i> Micah 6 | Psalm 71:1-16 | Luke 2:8-21 | Micah 7:18-20 | |
| <i>Sunday, 12/26:</i> Micah 7 | Psalm 71:17-24 | Luke 2:22-35 | Micah 7:18-20 | <i>The Lord's Table</i> |

Weekly Prayer

to Prepare for Worship

Grant, Almighty God, that, since to a perverse, and in every way a rebellious people, thou didst formerly show so much grace, as to exhort them continually to repentance, and to stretch forth thy hand to them by the Prophets,—O grant, that the same word may sound in our ears; and when we do not immediately profit by thy teaching, O cast us not away, but, by thy Spirit, so subdue all our thoughts and affections, that we, being humbled, may give glory to thy majesty, such as is due to thee, and that, being allured by thy paternal favor, we may submit ourselves to thee, and, at the same time, embrace thy mercy which thou offerest and presentest to us in Christ, that we may not doubt but thou wilt be a Father to us, until we shall at length enjoy that eternal inheritance, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son.

Amen.

John Calvin's Prayer following Sermons^{on}

Micah 1:1-5

Weekly Congregational

Response to the Call to Worship

O Lord, our Lord,
Assemble us together in Your presence
to teach us Your ways
so that we may walk in Your paths
according to Your Word
revealed in Christ who has come
and is coming again.

Amen.

Adapted from Micah 4:2

Micah 1

The Week of November 14th

Monday, 11/8: **Psalm 11:** Meditate on where and why David takes refuge. Why should you do the same?

Tuesday, 11/9: **John 1:1-13:** Why did Jesus come to this fallen world? How should that frame our celebration of this Advent Season?

Wednesday, 11/10: Prayerfully read John Calvin's prayer on page 10 and ask for God's word from Micah to sound in your ears and draw you into His presence.

Thursday, 11/11: **Micah 1:** How should God's people respond to the threat of God's judgment?

Friday, 11/12: **Micah 7:18-20:** Give thanks to God who uniquely pardons our iniquities in Christ whom we celebrate this Advent Season.

Saturday, 11/13: Read the preparatory letter for Savannah and Mercy Benn's baptisms on Sunday. Come with gratitude for Christ bearing God's judgment for your sin in His death and granting you newness of life in His resurrection.

Sunday, 11/14: *The Lord's Day Sabbath with Baptisms:* Pray for the Holy Spirit to humble those gathered to bear fruits in keeping with repentance and to nourish us in our redemption in Christ through the means of grace.

Micah 2

The Week of November 21st

Monday, 11/15: Psalm 84: What should you long to possess in the Lord?

Tuesday, 11/16: Matthew 1:18-25: Meditate on the gift of Jesus as Immanuel, God with us. How do you benefit from this on a regular basis?

Wednesday, 11/17: Prayerfully read John Calvin's prayer on page 10 and ask the Lord not to cast you down should you not immediately profit from His Word in Micah.

Thursday, 11/18: Micah 2: Do you struggle with greed and/or covetousness this Advent Season? Are material things more important to you than Christ? What hope would you have if this remained true?

Friday, 11/19: Micah 7:18-20: Gratefully rest in the glorious truth that God passes over your greed and covetousness by His grace alone through your faith alone in Christ alone.

Saturday, 11/20: Read the preparatory letter for the Lord's Table on Sunday. Come with a thankful heart for Jesus delivering you from God's wrath toward your greed and covetousness.

Sunday, 11/21: ^{The} Lord's Day Sabbath ^{with The} Lord's Table: Pray for the means of grace to reveal where you need to repent of focusing on material possessions more than the gift of eternal life that you received in Christ.

Micah 3

The Week of November 28th

Monday, 11/22: **Psalm 33:1-12:** Consider what the Lord loves according to the Psalmist. How do you display these things in a fallen world?

Tuesday, 11/23: **Luke 1: 39-55:** What does Mary long for in the coming of the Christ? How should this shape what we long for in the Christ who has come?

Wednesday, 11/24: Prayerfully read John Calvin's prayer on page 10 and ask the Lord to subdue your heart and affections to humble you to glorify God in His majesty displayed in Micah.

Thursday, 11/25: **Micah 3:** Pray for those who claim to be Christians in civic and religious leadership to be just and generous servants for God's glory and the benefit of those who bear His image.

Friday, 11/26: **Micah 7:18-20:** Give thanks that God's anger toward your failings is limited by Him because of His love for you and doesn't last forever.

Saturday, 11/27: Pray for the Holy Spirit to tender your heart toward those who serve others through leadership in God's name given the gravity of their calling.

Sunday, 11/28: *The Lord's Day Sabbath:* Pray for the means of grace to humble us to endure the failings of human governance in various realms in a way that glorifies the Lord knowing that He alone is the just Judge.

Micah 4

The Week of December 5th

Monday, 11/29: **Psalm 33:13-22:** Who does the Lord uniquely watch and protect?

Tuesday, 11/30: **Luke 1:67-79:** Meditate on God's promised redemption, and give thanks for how He has fulfilled this in Christ.

Wednesday, 12/1: Prayerfully read John Calvin's prayer on page 10 and ask the Lord to allure you by His paternal favor so that you would submit yourself to Him and His Word in Micah.

Thursday, 12/2: **Micah 4:** What follows God's judgment? Why is this an encouragement to you as His child?

Friday, 12/3: **Micah 7:18-20:** Give thanks for God's steadfast love for you and His people. How have you experienced (or are you experiencing) God's steadfast love in your life?

Saturday, 12/4: Read the preparatory letter for the Lord's Table on Sunday. Give thanks for your redemption through God's judgment of your sin in Christ.

Sunday, 12/5: *The Lord's Day Sabbath with The Lord's Table:* Pray for the means of grace to help us see how God's judgment precedes His redemption.

Micah 5

The Week of December 12th

Monday, 12/6: **Psalm 80:** What should you desire from the Shepherd of Israel?

Tuesday, 12/7: **Matthew 2:1-12:** Who is the Shepherd from Bethlehem in Micah 5?

Wednesday, 12/8: Prayerfully read John Calvin's prayer on page 10 and ask the Lord to help you embrace His mercy offered in Christ from His Word in Micah.

Thursday, 12/9: **Micah 5:** What is the result of the coming of the Shepherd from Bethlehem? Why does this matter to you?

Friday, 12/10: **Micah 7:18-20:** Give thanks for God's compassion toward you in Christ.

Saturday, 12/11: Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you submit to the gentle Shepherd from Bethlehem as opposed to subjecting yourself to violent tyrants who only bring condemnation.

Sunday, 12/12: *The Lord's Day Sabbath:* Pray for the means of grace to help our knees to bow and our tongues to confess Jesus as the redeeming Shepherd from Bethlehem.

Micah 6

The Week of December 19th

Monday, 12/13: **Psalm 71:1-16:** Which way do you run when wickedness or difficulty befalls you?

Tuesday, 12/14: **Luke 2:8-21:** How did you react the first time that you encountered Jesus?

Wednesday, 12/15: Prayerfully read John Calvin's prayer on page 10 and ask the Lord to meet you in your doubt as a loving Father as displayed in Micah.

Thursday, 12/16: **Micah 6:** Are the Lord's expectations of us as His people unclear? If not, what are they?

Friday, 12/17: **Micah 7:18-20:** Give thanks to the Lord's eternal commitment to your redemption.

Saturday, 12/18: Pray for the Holy Spirit to humble you into a posture of repentance so as to more fully enjoy your reconciliation in Christ.

Sunday, 12/19: *The Lord's Day Sabbath:* Pray for the Holy Spirit to use the means of grace to form us into those who do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.

Micah 7

The Week of December 26th

Monday, 12/20: **Psalm 71:17-24:** What are you proclaiming about the Lord through your words and deeds?

Tuesday, 12/21: **Luke 2:22-35:** What did Simeon hope for in the advent of the Messiah? How should this inform what we hope for and participate in as those in union with the Messiah?

Wednesday, 12/22: Prayerfully read John Calvin's prayer on page 10 and ask the Lord to preserve you in patience as you await the joy of your eternal inheritance which has been obtained for you by the blood of His only begotten Son.

Thursday, 12/23: **Micah 7:** Are you able to declare what Micah declares in verse 7 when you find yourself in difficult circumstances?

Friday, 12/24: **Micah 7:18-20:** What kind of god could provide greater than what our God has provided by pardoning your iniquity and passing over your transgressions in Jesus the Good Shepherd?

Saturday, 12/25: Read the preparatory letter for the Lord's Table on Sunday. Come grateful for the Lord's pardoning of your iniquity and passing over your transgressions in Christ.

Sunday, 12/26: *The Lord's Day Sabbath with The Lord's Table:* Pray for the Holy Spirit to help us experience God's compassion through the means of grace.

Suggested Resources

for further Study

Basic:

Dale Ralph Davis, *A Study Commentary on Micah* (Leyland: EP Books, 2010; 2015 Edition)

Bruce K. Waltke, "Micah" in *Obadiah, Jonah, Micah: An Introduction and Commentary*, D.J. Wiseman, gen. ed. (Downers Grove: Inter-varsity Press, 1988)

Intermediate:

John Calvin, *Commentary on Micah*, available at <https://www.studydrive.net/commentaries/eng/cal/micah-1.html>

John L. McKay, *Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah: God's Just Demands* (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 1988; Reprint 2019)

Advanced:

Leslie C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976)

Bruce K. Waltke, *A Commentary on Micah* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007)